

Mark - Child in Peril, Parent in Prayer

by J. Glyn Owen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of perseverance, humility, and faith in seeking God's help, as exemplified by the woman who sought Jesus' help for her daughter.

Duration: 50:29

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 21:18-19, Mark 7:24-30, Luke 11:9-10

Topics: "Miracle"

Description

The sermon is based on the story of a mother who brings her demon-possessed daughter to Jesus for help. The preacher emphasizes the importance of taking our problems to Jesus and relying on Him for solutions. He warns against encouraging sinful behavior in children and expecting them to escape the consequences. The sermon concludes with the message that Jesus, though initially ignoring the mother's plea, ultimately listens to her, commends her faith, and assures her that her child will be healed.

Transcript

I say for the benefit of those that are visiting us today that in our morning worship at this time we are really going through the gospel recorded by Mark. Though I read this morning from both Matthew and Mark, Mark is really the basis of our morning diet and we are going to continue it today. This doesn't mean to say that we are not grateful to the Lord for the harvest that we have had, but it may be good that we should show our thanksgiving to the Lord, not simply in the hymns we sing, one Lord's day in the year, but that we should intertwine our thanksgiving with everything.

And I trust that as we look at this dear woman who lacked something, who came with a need that only God could supply, we shall find the wells of gratitude and thanksgiving welling up and sending forth streams of praise that we, if we know our Lord Jesus Christ, are at the source of every needed thing in life. So our theme this morning is not going to be directly that of thanksgiving, but I think we shall find that it is not far away from that very important theme. We have quoted as our subject, Child in Peril, Parent in Prayer.

And you will notice that the basis of our meditation is going to be in Mark chapter 7 verses 24 to 30. Now we need this morning to take Matthew and Luke together in order to get a fairly complete picture of what really happened on this occasion. Mark doesn't tell us everything, neither does the other gospel that records the same story.

So we take Matthew and Mark together and then we have a fairly composite picture and on the basis of that we shall proceed. I've already read Matthew's version to you and I'm going to take the liberty now quickly to read through Mark's. And if you have your New Testament open, I suggest you keep it open at Mark's version which is in chapter 7 verses 24 to 30.

Jesus left that place and he went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it. Now please mark that, it's very important, right at the beginning.

Yet he could not keep his presence secret. In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek born in Syrian Phoenicia.

She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. First, let the children eat all they want, he told her, for it is not right to take the children's meat and to toss it to their dogs. Yes, Lord, she replied, but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.

Then he told her, for such a reply, you may go. The demon has left your daughter. She went home and found her child lying on the bed and the demon gone.

Now this is not a very easy passage of Scripture to come to. And if I had my way this morning, I might have skipped over this because it's got a number of things that challenge us and mystify us. But you can't do that with the Word of God, can you? And so I'm determined that we must look at it straight in the eye and see what really does it tell us.

Clearly the subject of the passage is that of intercession. Now forget about the things that mystify for a moment. What have we got here? Well, let me put it to you in terms of a picture.

We have a woman metaphorically bringing her little daughter who's in desperate need, bringing her to the Lord Jesus and pleading with Jesus on behalf of her daughter. That's the ministry of intercession. It's the ministry of prayer.

The need was desperate. Apparently there was no one else that could meet it. And so this woman brings her child's desperate need to Jesus and she intercedes on the daughter's behalf.

So then I suggest to you that what we have here in terms of principle, large principle, is this. We have a woman who is bringing the urgent problem of her home to the only one known to her who might be able to cope with it. And when I put it like that, I have a notion that you will say instinctively as I say instinctively, well if it's that, then it's got something to do with me.

See, there is something very, very tragic coming to the fore here. This woman was a pagan. She had no Jewish background.

She knew nothing about the God of the Old Testament or his promises or his covenants. She was a pagan woman. And yet this woman so loved her daughter that when her daughter got into this kind of trouble that is mentioned here, she brought her daughter's needs to Jesus and would not let him go.

Literally cornered him, if I may say so, very humbly, until he, out of the grace of his heart, without any compulsion really, though I say she cornered him with words, yet out of the grace of his heart he blessed her when she was not a child of Abraham or had any promise of God to plead in his presence. Oh, that we

likewise knew what to do when we have problems in the home and especially if they're problems with our children. Here is a pattern and it's a pagan woman who is teaching us.

May we learn to make war with sin and to draw near to the Savior with a problem that is perhaps tearing at the vitals of our hearts. It needs to be seen, however, especially now for our Knox people who are trying to follow the sequence of thought in Mark, it needs to be seen that there is a positive link between this incident and the one we were considering the last time. The early part of Mark chapter 7, you remember, is dealing with basically what our Lord said about the source of defilement in a man.

The source of defilement in a human being is not external to him but in his heart. The Pharisees, we saw, and the scribes were very fond of washing their hands between before meals and in between courses, thinking that somehow or other touching this or touching that could bring spiritual and moral defilement and defile their souls, their spirits. Says Jesus that absolutely Tommy Rot.

The real source of defilement is not external but it's internal. It's in your hearts. Out of the heart of man there proceeds evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, lusts, lasciviousness, an evil eye, and a whole host of other things.

Where do they all come from? The heart of man. Now says Jesus here, without putting it in so many words, by his action in the incident before us this morning. Look, he says, I want you to know that I can deal with a defilement of the human heart even when an agency of Satan comes in directly and takes charge, I can deal with it.

And I can deal with it at a distance without coming near. And I will deal with it when there is a mother or a father who is sufficiently concerned about the problem to bring the problem to me and trust me with it. That's the message.

Now then let's look at it as briefly as we can and may the Spirit of God help us to apply to our own needs and our own problems whatever those problems may be. It is not given to anybody in the pulpit to know the problems of a congregation. And if I were to apply this to everybody this morning, well I'd have to write and correspond with you for three or four months to know your problems.

I can't do that. But the Spirit of God knows your need. May he do so.

May he do so very clearly to all of us, preacher and people alike. Now just a word about the pressure that sent this mother to Jesus. Her daughter was badly afflicted by demonic powers.

It's the need of her daughter, not her own. And the need, pardon me, the need as diagnosed by the mother and the diagnosis was accepted by Jesus was this, that she was possessed of an evil spirit, a demonic spirit. Now I'm not going to pause with that.

Jesus accepted it and dealt with it. I'm not going to pause with that. I'm not going to try and say any more about it.

I'm taking it for granted. I'm taking it at its face value. I suppose we need to see behind that the paucity of physicians in her own territory where she lived, and especially of physicians who could deal with this problem.

I'm just putting two and two together here. If there were physicians living there that the woman knew and knew to be able to cope with this kind of situation, probably she would never have gone to a stranger who came there. We like to know our physicians.

We like to know their record. We like to know something about them. We don't like to go and trust ourselves or our children to outright strangers.

So I guess it is right and proper for us to conclude that really there was no one available and certainly no one else available who could tackle this kind of problem. But then the providence of God has been kind to her. Into her pagan territory, 40, 50 miles away from Jewish territory, comes this Jesus of Nazareth.

And as he has come into the territory, somebody or other has explained to her something about him and she knows that he can do what none other can. And so there is a great excitement abroad. And as soon as she heard that he was in the house, and we're not told what the house was or where it was or whose it was, but as soon as she heard that he was in the house, she goes full pelt, as they say, in some parts of the world, and she just made for him with her complaint and her need and her problem.

It would be a veritable denial of her motherly affection and all the moral principles not to seek the aid of the only one that can help when he's within reach. And Jesus, at this point, was within reach. Now that's all about the pressures that sent her to Jesus.

Come now to the main thrust of this passage, and I suppose we can put it like this. The perseverance with which this dear woman went on to plead with Jesus and took notice of hardly anything he said or did, save only whether he was going to give her what she was asking for her daughter. If I may put it four square at this point, I sense that we have here a Gentile and female equivalent of Jacob in the Old Testament.

Do you remember Jacob at Jabbok? Do you remember how he wrestled with the angel till the break of day? And he didn't recognize the angel. It was an angel with a capital A because it was the Lord. And Jacob wrestled, and when the angel said to him, now leave me go, he says, leave me go, says the angel to him.

Go your way and I go my way. No, no, no, no, says Jacob. I will not let you go unless you bless me.

You know we have a counterpart to that here, but it's not a Jewess. It's not a woman who had any promise of God which said she could do this. It's a Gentile, pagan, outright.

And she comes and she pleads and virtually what she says is exactly what Jacob says. Not in so many words, but in her attitude. I'm not gonna let you go unless you bless me.

She refuses to be cowed by anything he says or doesn't say, by silence or speech, and she will only be satisfied when Jesus looks her in the eye and says, I grant you your petition. You know, my friends, this is the kind of thing that honors our Lord. That honors our Lord.

Faith, daring faith, honors him. You do not dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ by by coming to him and trusting his grace and believing that he's good enough and great enough and willing enough to do what you ask of him. You don't dishonor him by that kind of faith, that daring faith.

You honor him. Now there's much in this passage to mystify us, but the Holy Spirit has given us this record and evidently, evidently you see there's something here for us to learn. As I come to it, I remember

something that a writer, an English writer of a previous generation said when he came to preach, or to write rather, an article on this theme.

He was referring to somebody known to him who was preaching on the incident of our Lord cursing the fig tree. And this man preaching about the cursing of the fig tree began it like this, began his sermon. He said, curse a fig tree? My master, curse a fig tree? It isn't like him.

And then this writer that I'm quoting goes on. So he says, when I read of our Lord's treatment of this Canaanite woman, I am tempted to say, what? Turn a deaf ear to a cry for help? What? Mock at sorrow's appeal? What? My master speak roughly to a woman, it just isn't like him. And yet the Holy Spirit makes Jesus or writes of Jesus doing certain things which are quite out of character with him.

Why? Now whenever I come face to face with something like this, I determine straightaway that it's a good thing to see the end of it. How did it turn out in the end? Let me put it to you in terms of a picture. Jesus and the woman started off here.

They ended here. They started off with a woman coming to beg. And Jesus taking no notice of her.

They ended up, Jesus has not only heard her, he's talked to her, he's listened to her prayer, he's commended her faith, he's told her to go home, and he says, assures her that her child is fine. Now, you see, that's where they started, this is where they ended. So I judge everything in between in the light of the beginning and the end.

But the question is this, Jesus did not make a straight line from that point to this point. He deviated. He went up there and down here and he meanders and he takes a roundabout route.

Now the question is, why did he do that? I want to suggest to you that the only reason why he did that must have been this. He knew the woman. If you forget that, you forget everything that gives a key to the situation.

He knew the woman. You know, John's gospel begins by telling us this. Before we come to any of the great episodes in John's gospel, John 3, John 4, 5, 6, and from there on, it assures us that Jesus knew everybody.

There were some people in Jerusalem, we read at the end of John 2, who said that they believed in Jesus. And then we're told straight afterwards, but he didn't believe in them. That's strange, isn't it? They believed in him, but he didn't believe in them.

Well, why didn't he believe in them? And then the answer is given, because he knew all men. And he did not need anyone to testify to him what man was like, because he knew all men and he knew what was in men's hearts. And then we go on into chapter 3, there was a man of the Jews called Nicodemus, and the record goes on to show how he knew Nicodemus.

And when you go on to chapter 4, we read about a woman at Sychar's well, and the record tells us how he knew that woman. And you go on into chapter 5, and chapter 6, and chapter 7, and you will see a whole recorded tissue showing us how Jesus knew the hearts of men. And because he knew the hearts of men, he knew how to deal with them.

And sometimes there are such vicissitudes in the thoughts and the thinking of men and women, that you can't deal straight with them, you can't take them in a straight line, you've got to humble them. You've got to deflate their pride. And you've got to deal with this and you've got to deal with that.

Now I believe that alone is the real explanation of the vicissitudes in the argument here. Jesus knew what he was about, and I judge that because I believe that little by little he moved the conversation to a point where he would not only give this woman what she was asking for, but as the Son of God commend her faith. And that in turn would show to his disciples that even among Gentiles he can elicit faith, when the leaders of the Jews in Jerusalem and elsewhere are already hardening their hearts against him.

Now I want you to notice the first challenge to this woman. She has brought her need to the Lord Jesus and she's asked him to do something about her child. Listen to how Matthew puts it.

A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him crying out, Lord Son of David have mercy on me, my daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession. You notice what Jesus did. It may be something similar to what he does when you sometimes pray to him.

He did not answer a word. He met her yearnings for her daughter with a solemn unbroken silence. Now why this? My dear friends, don't let's treat this as if it was something that had never happened before or never happened since.

There are many of us in this congregation and when we brought our request to the Lord Jesus, the first reaction of him, his first reaction to us has been exactly like this, silence. He said nothing. And there are other incidents in the Gospels and there are incidents in the Old Testament.

So it isn't something so absolutely extraordinary but he answered her not a word. Now we're concentrating on this woman. Now I want you to be quite assured of this, Jesus was not refusing to take any notice of her simply because she was a Gentile rather than a Jewess, a Gentile woman.

I read on into that passage in Mark chapter 7 verses 31 to 37 because Jesus is still in Gentile territory and as he goes around the region of Decapolis, the ten cities which were ten Greek cities, ten pagan cities, not Jewish, largely inhabited by Greeks. He performed miracles there, multitudes of miracles of all kinds of miracles upon all kinds of people and they were not Jews. More than that, going right back again into history, it's along quite a time now since Jesus sat at Sychar's well, we've already referred to it, and you remember that he brought blessing there to a woman who was a woman of the street whose character was evil and she was a Samaritan.

She was no more a Jewess than this woman here but Jesus blessed her. He told her that if only she would ask of him he would give her the water that was not in the well, Samaritan, and they used to call the Samaritans mongrels. Samaritan mongrel though she was, Jesus says, I'll bless you and you'll have the water of eternal life welling up in you.

Now you see, he could not therefore have been refusing this woman a blessing just because she was a pagan woman. Why then? Well, one reason probably is this. Jesus has for some time been looking for a time apart and some privacy for his disciples and himself.

You read back, I have no time to enlarge upon this now but I think it's very important here. Jesus has been looking for a time apart. They went first of all, you remember when the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 took place, why have they gone apart there? They went apart because come ye yourselves apart for a

little while, says Jesus.

They needed to be apart so that he could teach them all he needed to teach them before the hour of his work upon the cross would arrive. But that hour has never come yet, I mean the hour for his teaching them, the opportunity for his teaching them at large. So he takes them aside here 50 to 60 miles away from Jewish territory into a land where probably you would expect that no one knew him, but here he was known.

Mark says that having entered into the unspecified home in this pagan region, Jesus did not want anyone to know his whereabouts. Why? Because he needed to be alone with his disciples, he needed to teach them so much before the hour of his departure came. Moreover, Jesus knowing what faith would emerge in this woman's heart, wanted to bring home to the disciples the fact that he was able to elicit faith and impart faith even in the heart of a pagan woman when he took over.

She persevered then despite his silence. Do you? Second thing I want you to notice is that she persevered despite his continued silence to her and also his enigmatic statement to the disciples. Matthew second part of verse 23 and 24 goes on like this, so his disciples came to him and urged him, send her away for she keeps crying out after us.

I guess we understand how the disciples felt. This woman was crying out for help. You see, she was in earnest.

If we were in earnest, we'd sometimes make a little more noise than we do, you know. Oh yeah, we would. We can be as staid and as quiet and as starchy just because we're not in earnest.

This woman was in earnest. She loved her daughter. Jesus was there.

She was after him. She was not going to let him go, so she doesn't mind shouting. It's not beyond shouting and raising her voice.

It's a bit of a nuisance, of course, to the little disciples around, group of disciples around Jesus. This woman shouting after us. But you see, she was in earnest.

She loved her daughter. Then Jesus turned to the disciples and he says, I, he said, was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. Now it's very difficult for us to know in what tone of voice Jesus said that.

And tone of voice means everything here. But Jesus said it, as if to say something like this, if I understand it right. They said, send her away.

She's a bit of a nuisance. Whether they meant give her what she wants and then send her away, or whether they meant send her away irrespective of what she wants, I don't know. I don't think we've any, we've any way of determining.

But at any rate, they wanted to get rid of her because she was a nuisance shouting after them. And then Jesus says, I was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Did the burdened mother overhear that statement? I wonder.

I don't know. If she did, you see, she may have felt like this. Well, look here, he's closing the door.

He's telling me not to come any further. He's telling me not to ask any more. He's telling me that that his mission is exclusively to other people, not to me.

But I am, I am taken up with the fact that that Matthew puts it like this. He gives us to understand that at that point the woman fell on her knees and then turned up to the Lord Jesus. And though her prayer is shorter, it's still more poignant.

Lord, Jesus, help me. Sometimes we can take so long with our prayers because we haven't got much poignancy in them, much urgency in them. But when a prayer becomes urgent, it oftentimes becomes shorter.

Of course, Jesus' ministry was essentially to the Jew first. Now, I mustn't, any more than the gospel writer here, I must not try to, to, to, to, to, to cancel that. Jesus' ministry was to the Jew first.

But ultimately, it was to include both Jew and Gentile, to quote Paul's words in Ephesians chapter 2, with a middle wall of partition between them torn down by the cross so that you couldn't see it anymore. And Jew and Gentile are one in Christ. That was God's ultimate purpose.

Did Jesus let this dear woman overhear the harsher half of that truth? If so, be it noted, rather than be silenced to helplessness by the word's concern, the woman was moved to a greater desperation and she still will not let him go. Now, you see, this is, this will not be put off. Jesus says, if she, if she heard it, Jesus says something she could interpret to say, the door's shut to you.

It's open to other people, but not to you. She won't take it. She will knock in order that the door may still open.

She believes she will. Men and women, listen, most of us have the covenants of God behind us and the Word of God in our hands and we know the promises of God, and yet you know what throttles my, my emotion this morning and my thinking? It's the knowledge of the fact that we turn back unless God opens the door immediately and says, yes, I'll give you now what you want. The fact of the matter is this, you see, it's very humbling.

Most of us take our problems anywhere and everywhere, but to Jesus Christ anyway. I mean Christian people, evangelical people. He's the last person we think of as competent to deal with some of our problems.

She braves on and she insists and she persists through his silence, through his enigmatic speech that she doesn't understand. Then I want you to come further with me. She persisted despite any cause of stumbling which might have been construed from Jesus' direct word to her.

Now Jesus addresses her directly, but what's he going to say to her when he speaks to her? Something more strange to our ears. I have no doubt that some of you have not known what to make of this passage. Seeing her kneeling before him and hearing her ardent tones with which she begged for his intervention, Jesus in whatever tone of voice we cannot say replied, here it is, hold your breath.

First, let the children eat all that they want, for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs. Now, two things stand out there. If she had the nerve and if she had the humility to see these two things, we should, reading these words at our leisure, two things stand out.

One, those words told her that she did not have first claim upon his mission, that her child did not belong to the, quote, family, unquote, to whom he was to minister in the first place. He was sent to minister to the family. He was the bread of God to the family in the first place, and the family was the chosen of God at that particular point, and she did not belong to the family.

So the first truth involved in this statement is, first, let the children eat the bread. Let the children eat. The second thing is this.

If she was not too incensed by that statement, and if she was humble enough to concede to God the right to choose others before herself, you know, it's amazing how many people don't agree that the Almighty has any right to do this kind of thing, you know. It's amazing how many people think that we've got the right to choose. I got a right to choose my wife.

You've got the right to choose your husband. I've got the right to choose the car I want to buy, provided I got the money, but the Almighty's got no right to choose anything. Poor Almighty God.

It's a pity for Him, but the Bible says that God has prior right to everything. He has the right of choice, and until you and I see God as having right of choice, I tell you, we've not seen the God of the Bible, only the God of modern philosophy, who's got to toe the line. He's got to be careful.

He's got to undo what he's done in order to come into line with things that are acceptable today in our colleges and universities. Modern thought. If she was not too incensed by that statement, and was humble enough to concede that God had the right to choose somebody else before her, I want you to notice the promise that was hid there for her.

Oh my God, wraps up His promises sometimes. They're like Christmas presents. There's so much wrapping, and you've got to unwrap before you get to the real thing.

You've got it here. Did you notice what Jesus said? First he said, let the children eat what they want. Can't you get it? Have you got it? How many of you have got the point? How many of you have got the thrill? I'll tell you, it's all wrapped up in that little word, first.

You see, Jesus is coming near to the woman. He's creating faith, you see. He's creating expectation.

He said, woman, he says, first, there are other people. But first means second. He's not telling her yet.

But first, he says, let the children be fed. Then he says, I'll come to you after, but first. Now I doubt whether, as spoken by Jesus, the other words here that upset us and upset our contemporaries very much, I doubt whether they would have upset this woman as they upset us.

Particularly so because of the way Jesus changed so many of the words from the way they were normally used in a bitter sense. For example, look at this reference to dogs. Now this really takes us by storm, and we just don't understand how such a word could have come over the lips of the Son of God.

It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs. But now I want you to know two or three things which are very important here. Particularly the fact that Jesus went out of his way to save embarrassment to the woman and to take any anything exceptional out of that word and re-clothe it.

He modified the popular term used of dogs in New Testament times and used especially by the Jews about Gentiles. Now the ordinary word for dog is really a bad one. I guess the only modern equivalent to it

is the word bitch.

You use that sometimes of a very bad woman, a bitch. I hope we don't have to use it. And that's the nuance that would be given to a dog in the Old Testament when used by the Jew of a Gentile.

But you know the Lord Jesus Christ took all the sting out of it. You know what he did? He did two things. First of all, he didn't use the ordinary word for dog at all.

He used an entirely different word which means not ordinary dog. The ordinary dog was the the kind of dog you see roaming the streets of the Middle East. A scavenger dog that will always scowl and fight if you if you if you don't get out of the way.

Because he's after something. He's after anything that's around. He's a vicious creature.

Jesus didn't use that word at all. He used a word that literally meant, literally means or literally meant the little pet lap dog that the opulent had in their homes. An entirely different thing altogether.

A little lap dog was almost like a toy, a pet dog. And a little toy, a little pet dog that was invariably found under the table playing with the children. And if there were any crumbs left by the children to fall on the floor, well the little lap dogs helped themselves.

More than that, Jesus used a diminutive. And diminutives in Greek always carry with them endearment. You wonder why the New Testament is written in Greek.

There are many reasons for that and here's one of them. The language, the word that Jesus used was a term of endearment. In Scots you speak about the wee one or the wane or in Ireland too.

The wane, the little one you see, the dear one. And it carries endearment with it. And Jesus speaks about the little doggy, the wee doggy, the pet dog.

But now notice what he's done. Without ushering anything, without uttering anything big or sounding a fanfare, what Jesus has done is this. He has brought this distant Gentile woman who was outside the pale of the covenant promises of Abraham.

He has brought her into the home. He has domesticated her. He has put her under the table as one of the pet dogs.

You say I wouldn't have Jesus talk to me about that. Well you see, this is the difference. We are living in a day and age where the whole psychological outlook is so different and we are so proud and so arrogant we cannot take our place in the plan and purposes of God.

But this woman did and this is the wonder of the story. Jesus gave her the promise first, then you. Second, I'm not talking about you as a prowling roaming dog that bites everybody and goes like a scavenger after any old bone.

You're one of the little pet ones. But thereby he introduced her. He domesticated her.

He brought her into the family circle and told her to wait. To wait and she'd have something more than a crumb. That could have been a point of crisis for our pleading mother.

Was she willing to accept her position in God's plan and timing or did she want to argue from a position of alleged equality or to a position of an alleged merit? You know the woman replied without any hesitation at all. She was not offended. Her repartee was such as to show that her growing optimism was bubbling up within her and ever enlarging her faith.

She will have it yet. Yes Lord, she says to him. But even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.

You say I'm only a pet wee dog. All right, she says. That's all I'm asking.

She takes him at his word. She accepts what he says and she accepts her place right there. But after all, she says to Jesus, this is the logic of it.

I'm only asking for what is given to the puppy. I'm not asking for the children's meal that's on the table. I'm only asking for a weak crumb.

I'm only asking for you to heal my daughter. You know my friends, what my passage this morning tells me is this. That Jesus could not, even if he wanted to, he could not withhold his heart's love and affection and esteem and commendation from a woman that takes him by storm like that.

Now I've done something with my time this morning, I'm sorry. I've got to finish. I had such a lot to say, but I've got to finish.

I want to say two things by way of application. First is this. Do you not see that it was her trial that brought this woman to Jesus? And if you read the New Testament, you will find that there would be multitudes of men and women and families that would never have known the grace of God were it not for the fact that their trials brought them to him.

There was no one else who could cope. And that makes me bold enough to affirm that sometimes Jesus has to leave some of us, get into such turmoil, that we will recognize that there is only one thing to do, and that is to turn to him, the almighty and all-gracious God. What brought the lepers to Jesus in the days of his flesh? Desperation.

No one else could help them. What brought the blind and the lame and the dumb wherever he went? Desperation. What brought the woman with the issue of blood to touch the hem of his garment? Desperation after many years and spending all that she had and being no bettered.

What brought the father of the demoniac lad to seek his help? What brought the proud Jairus as a suppliant to his feet? I'll tell you, desperation. And I want to suggest to you, my friend, that sometimes you and I have got to be allowed to go to the edge of a precipice before we come to the point of desperation where prayer becomes anything other than just a mumbo-jumbo. We evangelicals can piece words together beautifully and end it all up with the name of Jesus, period.

But there's no heart to it. There's no soul in it. We've never known an urgency that makes us beg.

There comes an end to God's time of playing with his people. That is why you see the Old Saints and the Old Testament sometimes spoke of God's turning his back on his people. Sometimes spoke of God's going away from his people.

Now I know this is metaphorical. Sometimes they spoke of God's silence and he wouldn't speak. You read the Song of Solomon and other parts of the Old Testament.

My friends, there are times when God does exactly that. He just turns his back. Why? Because he wants us to run after him and show him that we really need him.

The tragedy is, you see, that many of us that bear the name of God are quite happy if he runs away from us, provided we can have his blessings. I must end like this. It is that principle of desperation that is lacking today on two levels.

The level of conversion and the level of sanctification. And that's why our churches are such sad, sad places of people that seek for nothing and get what they seek. I say to you, there are multitudes of men and women that are only sufficiently interested in eternal life to talk about it and to study about it and to discuss about it.

The rich young man was so interested in eternal life he went to Jesus to talk about it. But he wasn't sufficiently interested in eternal life to do what he had to do to possess it. And the same goes in the realm of sanctification.

We play with holiness and we toy and we ask ourselves, how can I train myself and my family and my young people and my children to sin without sinning, to get us near the precipice, to be as worldly as they can without getting involved in open sin. And that's the philosophy of much of our evangelical community. I've heard it my friends.

I've been boiling in my soul the last few weeks. Some things I've heard about fathers and mothers talking about their children. You cannot encourage your children to play with sex and expect them in the name of God to get away with it in the end.

A thing to do when you've got a problem is take it to Jesus. And it may well be that before we do that and before we've become sane enough to take God at his word, we'll have to see tragedy wrecking our homes and our hearts until there's a little demon-possessed lass eaten to the core. You can't control her physical, nor her mental, nor her spiritual being.

And there we see her racking herself out. And then at last we'll remember, aha, we've heard of Jesus. Can he do anything? My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, you may have been upset at some of the things I've said this morning, but I'll assure you of one thing.

You'll be no more upset than my heart is this morning. She persevered and prayed and she didn't have a solitary promise in the Word of God to plead, but she prayed and she was a pagan. My dear people, let's take things seriously to the glory of our blessed Lord.

That's what's at stake. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/26/SID26539.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-glyn-owen/mark-child-in-peril-parent-in-prayer/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net